



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony to the Select Committee on Children

Submitted February 23, 2010 by

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Senator Musto, Representative Urban, and members of the Select Committee on Children, we write on behalf of the state's police chiefs.

The purpose of **RB #5041 AAC CROSS-REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND ANIMAL CRUELTY** is laudable—to protect victims of inhumane treatment by increasing its reporting. But the devil is in the details, and there are details in this bill which concern us.

Section 1 would add animal-control officers to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. Those currently on the list are there due to their professional focus or specialized training in providing medical care and/or child care. Animal control officers have a different professional focus and may lack such specialized training.

This section constitutes an unfunded mandate for an animal-control officer's employer to provide such training, because a mandated reporter who fails to report abuse can be fined from five hundred dollars to two thousand five hundred dollars and compelled to attend educational and training program.

Section 2 requires mandated reporters of cruelty to animals to report such cruelty to the Commissioner of Agriculture. Although the Commissioner may have ultimate jurisdiction, a report to the local law-enforcement authority is more practicable.

Police departments provide service twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, while the Commissioner or his designate may not be available nights and weekends. A call to the local police authority can set in motion an immediate investigation of the complaint, enable interruption of continuing abuse, and allow provision of prompt veterinary attention to abused animals.

The Connecticut police chiefs cannot support this bill in its current form.

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